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SUBJECT; VISIT OF U.S. TRACK AND FIELD TEAM TO THE PRC

REF: STATE 133283

SUMMARY. THE MAY 16-30 VISIT OF THE US TRACK AND FIELD TEAM TO THE PRC PORTRAYED THE UNITED STATES IN A HIGHLY POSITIVE LIGHT TO THE LARGEST NUMBER OF CHINESE YET TO BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH THE U.S. THE POWER OF THE U.S. TEAM WHICH WON 90-95 PERCENT OF THE EVENTS MADE A DEEP IMPRESSION ON CHINESE OFFICIALS AND SPECTATORS PRESENT, EFFECTIVELY COUNTERING THE ASSUMPTION OF CHINESE PROPAGANDA THAT US SOCIETY HAS GROWN FLABBY AND IS ON THE DECLINE. IT ALSO PROVIDED THE CHINESE SIDE WITH AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AT FIRST HAND THE TECHNIQUES PRC ATHLETES WILL HAVE TO LEARN AND THE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY THEY WILL HAVE TO REACH TO MAKE A PRESENTABLE SHOWING IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES. IN SUM, USLO BELIEVES THE VISIT WAS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS IN PROMOTING OUR EXCHANGE OBJECTIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRC VISIT OF THE US TRACK AND FIELD TEAM WAS THE HIGHEST PROFILE EXCHANGE GROUP SENT BY THE U.S. SIDE SINCE THE SEPTEMBER 1973 VISIT OF THE PHILADELPHIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. AT LEAST 250,000 CHINESE WATCHED THE COMPETITIONS AND MILLIONS MORE LEARNED OF THE VISIT BY WORD OF MOUTH AND
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THE EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY--BY CHINESE STANDARDS--GIVEN THE TEAM

BY THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY AND LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IN CANTON, SHANGHAI AND PEKING. COMMENTS TO USLO PERSONNEL BY SEVERAL CHINESE FROM CADRES TO TAXI DRIVERS AND AN APPROACH BY AN AMERICAN EXPATRIATE IN SHANGHAI TO A TEAM MEMBER INDICATED TICKETS WERE EAGERLY SOUGHT AND DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN BY PERSONS WITH APPROPRIATE AFFILIATIONS. CROWDS WERE NEAR CAPACITY AT ALL OF THE STADIUMS DESPITE HEAVY RAINS AND IN CANTON HUNDREDS OF PERSONS WITHOUT TICKETS WATCHED FROM NEARBY ROOFTOPS. THE TIMING OF THE VISIT WAS ALSO AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE INTEREST THE TEAM GENERATED. CHINA IS NOW IN THE MIBXT OF PREPARING FOR ITS THIRD NATIONAL GAMES THIS FALL AND THE CHINESE MAN ON THE STREET'S INTEREST IN SPORTS IS AT ITS HIGHEST LEVEL IN A DECADE.

2. PRESS REPORTS HAVE DESCRIBED THE WARM RECEPTION ACCORDED THE TEAM IN CHINA. SOME OF THIS, OF COURSE, WAS THE INSTANT FRIENDSHIP CONTRIVED BY THE CHINESE FOR ALL VISITING GROUPS. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THE CHINESE WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY FOR THE TRACK AND FIELD TEAM. CHINESE EFFORTS TO ACCOMMODATE THE NUMEROUS WISHES OF THE TEAM AND PRESS AND THEIR UNUSUAL FLEXIBILITY IN HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS IMPRESSED USLO ESCORT AS WELL BEYOND THE NORMAL LEVEL OF FACILITATION FOR SUCH GROUPS.

3. AS EXPECTED, TEAM MEMBERS PROVED EFFECTIVE BEARERS OF GOOD WILL AND IMPRESSED THEIR HOSTS WITH THEIR SPORTSMANSHIP. PERHAPS MORE GRAPHIC IN THE MIND OF THE CHINESE SPECTATORS, HOWEVER, WAS THE IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF AMERICAN POWER AS OUR ATHLETES WON EVENT AFTER EVENT, USUALLY WITH THE ONLY REAL COMPETITION COMING FROM ANOTHER U.S. ATHLETE. THE SIGHT OF AMERICAN RUNNERS WINNING EVERY RACE BROUGHT A PAINED ASIDE FROM OUR CHIEF CHINESE HOST TO THE EFFECT THAT IT SEEMED INCREDIBLE THAT IN A POPULATION OF 800 MILLION CHINA COULD NOT FIND PEOPLE WHO COULD RUN. THE FIRST REACTION OF EVERY CHINESE WE HAVE TALKED TO ABOUT THE TEAM'S VISIT IS A RUEFUL STATEMENT ABOUT THE POWER AND ABILITY OF THE AMERICAN TEAM. AS ONE WESTERN DIPLOMAT STATIONED IN PEKING PUT IT, THE TRACK AND FIELD TEAM'S VISIT WAS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA FOR THE SUPERPOWER ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES THAN ANY NUMBER OF MILITARY OPERATIONS REMOTE FROM CHINA'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BORDER.

4. IN ADDITION TO EFFECTIVELY PROJECTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF A POWERFUL UNITED STATES, THE VISIT ALSO PROVIDED USEFUL MEANS TO DISCUSS INCREASED EXCHANGES WITH THE CHINESE AND TO LEARN ABOUT THE CHINESE SPORTS PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, IT HAD THE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL EFFECT OF GIVING A REASONABLY ACCURATE VIEW OF CHINA TO A FAIRLY YOUNG AND IMPRESSIVE

SEGMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

5. FOR THE CHINESE, THE PRIMARY VALUE OF THE VISIT WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY AT CLOSE RANGE THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNIQUES IN TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS AND TO SET A STANDARD THEY WOULD HAVE TO MEET BEFORE THEY COULD HOPE TO COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS WITHOUT A MAJOR LOSS OF FACE. COPIOUS NOTES WERE TAKEN IN THE COACHING SESSIONS, DETAILED MOVIES WERE MADE, AND CHINESE OFFICIALS LOST NO OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE FOR POINTERS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THEIR TECHNIQUE.

6. WE SUSPECT ALSO THAT CHINESE SPORTS OFFICIALS WERE USING THE COMPETITION TO PUT PRESSURE ON POLITICAL OFFICIALS FOR GREATER EMPHASIS ON SPORTS PROGRAMS AND A FREER HAND FOR THE SPORTS PEOPLE TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING TALENTED CHINESE ATHLETES. CERTAINLY, NO CHINESE OFFICIAL--NOR PROBABLY ANY SPECTATOR FOR THAT MATTER--LEFT THE STADIUM WITHOUT THE FEELING THAT CHINA WOULD HAVE TO WORK HARD TO OVERCOME ITS DEFICIENCIES IN TRACK AND FIELD IF IT WERE TO HOLD ITS HEAD HIGH IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION. THE ABSENCE OF HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FIGURES ON THE LAST DAY OF THE MEET IN PEKING SEEMED TO SUGGEST THERE WERE LIMITS TO THE AMOUNT OF FACE CHINESE LEADERS WERE WILLING TO LOSE TO LEARN THE LESSON.

7. THE VISIT, OF COURSE, RAN INTO A FEW PROBLEMS. THE PRESENTATION BY THE AMERICAN SIDE OF AAU TRACK AND FIELD BOOKS AS SOUVENIRS WHICH INCLUDED THE RECORD OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S RUNNER CHI CHENG BUT NOT THE (UNRECOGNIZED) WORLD RECORD HIGH JUMP BY OUR CHINESE HOST NI CHIH-CHIN TOUCHED A RAW NERVE. A PRC OFFICIAL IN SHANGHAI, LATER IDENTIFIED AS FROM THE CHINA TRAVEL SERVICE, ALONG WITH OTHER OFFICIALS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DELIVERED A STERN LECTURE TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE STAFFER AND USLO EXCORT ON THE INIQUITIES OF PERPRETRATING "TWO CHINAS" IN SPORTS PRESENCE OF OTHER CHINESE OFFICIALS, BUT AFTER THE AMERICAN SIDE AGREED TO STOP HANDING OUT BOOKS THE SUBJECT WAS DROPPED, CHINESE WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE AAU'S VAGUELYDEFINED "DOCUMENTARIAN" WHO WAS RECORDING THE VISIT ON 16MM FILM. HOWEVER, AFTER A RITUAL EXPRESSION OF DISPLEASURE, THEY AGREED TO LET HIM OPERATE UNIMPEDED. (DURING DISCUSSION OF THIS, THEY CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE KNOWN THAT HIS ROLE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH PRCLO)

8. NAIVETE OF US PRESS REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT CHINESE SOCIETY ALSO CAUSED SOME ANGUISHED MOMENTS AT START OF TOUR. USLO BELIEVES IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INCLUDE ONE CHINA SPECIALIST IN FUTURE PRESS GROUPS COVERING SUCH EVENTS TO MINIMIZE

TENDENCY OF PRESS TO WRITE WILDLY INACCURATE STORIES ON CHINESE SOCIETY. PLAY IN AMERICAN PRESS ON INCIDENT INVOLVING A DRUNKEN TEAM MEMBER AT FINAL BANQUET SEEMED TO US TO BE UNFAIR. THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED AWAY FROM CHINESE, WAS A SMALL MATTER IN COMPARISON TO GENERAL EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR OF THE TEAM, AND WAS NOT A SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT TO THE U.S. TYPICALLY, THE SPORTS WRITERS WITH THE GROUP APPARENTLY JUMPED ON THIS INCIDENT RATHER THAN WRITE MORE SERIOUS STORIES ON THE OVERALL IMPORTANCE OF THE VISIT.

9. THE NEGATIVES, HOWEVER, IN USLO'S VIEW WERE VASTLY OUTWEIGHTED BY THE POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE VISIT. WE BELIEVE THE US TRACK AND FIELD TEAM'S TRIP TO THE PRC MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WE WOULD ADD THAT MAJOR CREDIT FOR THIS SUCCESS GOES TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE STAFFERS WHO ABLY HANDLED MOST OF THE DETAILS OF THE VISIT IN CHINA. BUSH

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